

A THREEFOLD ALPHABET OF RULES

CONCERNING

Christian Practice.

The first Precept of every Letter Concerning DUTY towards GOD; The second towards our NEIGHBOR; The third towards our SELVES: Gathered at a Friends Request in this ORDER, for the helping of the MEMORY.

A.

A Wake with God in the Morning, and before all things give him your first Fruits, and and Calves of your Lips, in 1. Confession of Sin. 2. Petition of Necessaries for Body and Soul. 3. Thankfulness for Mercies received, and especially your late Preservation, Rest, and Protection of you and yours.
2. Account it not enough, that your self serve God, unless that you see all in your Charge do the same. *Psalm 138. 2. Gen 14. 14. and 18. 19. Eph 4. 23.*
3. Arm your self against whatsoever the day may bring forth; and upon all occasions think on your happy Redemption, with much thankfulness, for so happy conjunction of Justice and Mercy.

B.

Beware of occasions of Sin, and wisely inure your Self in subduing the least, that at length the greater may be felled.
2. Believe all that God speaketh unto you out of his Word, but not all that Man telleth you: nor tell to another all that you hear, but only the truth; and that neither all, nor always. *1 Sam. 10. Eccles 5. 1.*
3. Before you take in hand any thing Consult with God's Word whether it be Lawfull, and then perform it with Prayer, that it may be as Successfull as Lawfull. *Luke 2. 19. 1 Sam. 2. 1. 1 Sam. 30. 2.*

C.

Carefully set your self in God's presence all the day long, that seeing him at your right hand you may not fall.
2. Carry your self unto all, as the Weak may be won, the Strong comforted, and the Wicked ashamed. *Cor. 10. 32. Col 4. 5.*
3. Consider the dignity of your Soul; how beautiful it is to God and his Angels, so long as you keep it unspotted, so that you may cleanse your heart from the first motions of sinful Thought; as Lust, Anger, Envy, Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, Fullness, and the like, because the least sin defileth clean. *James 1. 15. Eph 4. 22. 31. Col 3. 5, 8.*

D.

Daily Morning and Evening at least, solemnly on your knees make Confession and Requests with Thanksgiving, first preparing your Heart to seek the Lord: in the Morning, think that day may be your last; and when you go to Bed, you know not whether you shall rise, unless it be to Judgment; it is safest therefore to use Prayer as a Key to open the Morning, and as a Bar or Lock to shut in the Evening.
2. Delight to do all the good you can to God's Children, and to receive all the good you can from them. *Gal 6. 10.*
3. Distrust not God's Providence in any matter, although you see the means wanting; neither when you have them, let them be relied on more than God himself; but let him be prayed unto for the prosperous use of them. *2 Cor. 3. 5. 1 Cor. 3. 7. Rom. 1. 15.*

E.

Exercise your Mind in meditating often on the Works of God, as his Creating and Governing of the World, his Preserving and Punishing the Wicked, his Blessing and Correcting his Children, his Preparing of unspeakable Joy for the one, and unutterable Torments for the other; but especially on the Sabbath, add to these Meditations the holy exercises of Prayer, Preaching, Sacraments, holy Conference, and such like. *Jer. 12. 2. Habakk 1. 13. Matth. 25. 31. Exod. 20. 8.*
2. Esteem of every one better than your self, and the more you excell another, be so much the more humbled. *Rom 12. 16. Philip. 2. 3.*
3. Examine your Thoughts well whether they tend, before you fulfil your own desires; if you find them unprofitable, curious, vain, or such as you cannot yield a sufficient reason to God or Man for, kill them in the Shell, let them not live or breath longer in you. *Rom. 14. 23. Prov. 6. 14. Zach 8. 17. Psal 49. 3.*

F.

Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole Duty of Man. *Eccles. 12. 13.*
2. Fly and avoid Places and Persons infectious, wanton, idle, unthrifty and bad Company, which are to the Soul as poisoned and infected Air to the Body. *Prov. 5. 8. and 6. 27, 28.*

3. Follow with Faithfulness and Diligence your own Business, in the lawfull and particular Calling wherein God hath placed you; only be careful in your earthly Business to carry an heavenly Mind. *Eccles. 1. 13.*

G.

Grow up daily in the practise of every Commandment, and in the faith of every promise of God, seeing God would have the planted in his House thrive, well liking, and more fruitful in their Age: he that is not best at last, may fear whether ever he were good. *Psalm 91. 13, 14.*
2. Give no offence justly unto any Man, whether within or without; for woe be to them by whom offences come. *1 Cor. 10. 32. Rom. 14. 13.*
3. Grieve for nothing in the World so much as for your own Sins, and in them for nothing so much as for offending to loving a God, and that not only in committing of evil, but also in omitting of good.

H.

Humble your self for your Sins that the Lord may raise you up; for he that judgeth himself aright shall never be Judged of the Lord. *1 Cor. 11. 31.*
2. Honour all in their places, but no Man so much for his Greatness as for his Goodness, and thus shall you imitate the Lord himself, who accepteth not Persons, but in every Nation accepteth him that feareth him. *Mat. 23. 12.*
3. Have a special care to avoid those Sins which you have found your self most inclin'd unto, and which have in times past most prevailed; for Sin is loth to be said nay, and Satan seeketh re entry.

I.

Imitate God's Wisdom in all his proceedings, concerning your self and others, his Power in sustaining, his Providence in Maintaining, his Justice in Punishing, his Love in Correcting, his Bounty in Promising, his Faithfulness in Performing, his Grace in giving, his Mercy in taking away; and in every thing say from the Heart: Blessed be the name of the Lord. *Job 1. 21.*
2. In every Company receive some good, and do some good to your Power; leave no ill favor behind you, neither do hurt by Speech, Silence, Countenance or Example, in your praise be discreet, in saluting courteous, in admittance Brotherly, and wife in moving, and entertaining Speech or Conference.
3. It is fearful to Sin, much more to lye in it; and therefore Register all your Sins daily; bewail them as fit times, pray for Pardon of them, and Strength against them: Contemn none as counting it little because Gods Law hath condemned it and Christ hath died for it, or else must you Eternally.

K.

Know God in Christ, with his life Everlasting, Kiss the Son of God lest he be angry, and know your self to be a believer and that Christ is in you and you in him. *John 17. and 8. Psalm 1. 12.*
1. Keep your Vows with God, so your Lawful Promises with Men, your Faith and Truth must Kiss each other in Christian Conversation. *Prov. 4. 23.*
3. Keep out wandering Worldly thoughts as much as possible, that you may be narrowly Watching your Heart, for such as you suffer to be, such will be your words, deeds and whole Conversation.

L.

Love all things for Gods sake, and 1. God only for his own; and look you make him your friend, whosoever be your Enemy for it; this you shall do, if as an obedient Child, you live in the eye of your Heavenly Father.
2. Look upon the Lives and Behaviors of the Wicked to avoid them; of the Godly, to imitate them; upon the Life and Death of them both; as also your own not far off, to make you loath this World, long after the Life to come.
3. Let your Meat, Apparel, Recreation be Lawful, Needful, and Moderate. *Luke 21. 34. Rom. 13. 13.*

M.

Make not mention of God or any Word or Work of his but with fear and reverence, nor of any Man but with Love and Carefulness, using his Name as you would have him to use yours. *Deut. 28. 5. 8. Mat. 7. 12.*
2. Mark other Mens profiting in Religion to provoke your self, their slip to make your self more wary, their risings to be thankful to God for them.
3. Meditate often upon the four last things, 1. Death 2. Judgment. 3. Heaven. 4. Hell,

N.

Never make show of more Holiness outwardly then inwardly you have in your Heart with God: feign in which he desireth truth; nor please your self with your unprofitableness, unsiftedness or unwillingness to good. *Rom. 12.*
2. No Man is owner, but steward of that he hath; you must therefore impart of the Blessings you have, to those that stand in need, wisely, heartily and in due season.
3. Note your own special corruptions whether they grow stronger or weaker, and how your self can resist them, and if any assault you, more strongly. Pray, and make the matter known to God, the best way for a Woman solicited to folly to be rid of the tempter, is to tell her Husband. *Cor. 11. 28. Rom. 12. 12.*

O.

Often speak to the Praise of God never of your self: for other things because many words want not iniquity speak as few as you can, or rather none then unprofitable. *Prov. 27. 2. and 10. 19.*
2. Open not your Mouth to speak of other Mens Infirmities, especially behind them nor before them without Grief and Sorrow. *Jam. 1. 19. Psalm 15. 3.*
3. Of every idle word account must be given, and much more of every wicked word, and therefore let your Speech be gracious, pondered with Salt, and tending to Edification. *Mat. 12. 36. Col. 4. 6.*

P.

Praise the Lord for every new Benefit bestowed, and then by it promote his Glory, the Churches good, your own Salvation; esteeming of Graces, Given as spurs to godliness, and pledges of eternal Life. *Thes. 5. 18.*
2. Prevent anger before it kindle; it is Wisdom to quench the least sparkle of fire before it begins to flame, consider 1. the Original of Anger; being pride or self Love, 2. the cursed Fruits by giving place to the Devil, 3. Gods patience, 4. Gods Image in your Brother, 5. your own Weakness in the same Guide, 6. the wrong is not remedied by Revenge, but enlarged; nor the wrong Doer amended but imitated. *Eccles. 7. 9. Prov. 4. 17.*
3. Prepare your self for Death, and pull out his sting by, 1. Bewailing time past, 2. Turning to God in time to come, 3. Proposing a new Life, none can Die ill that have had a care to live well; but if you Die well doubt not but you shall do better. *Cor. 15. 56.*

Q.

Quiet your Heart, and be still under the correcting Hand of God, because 1. he doth it, 2. for your best, 3. he will moderate it, 4. supply Strength, 5. seasonably deliver out of it. *Psalm 39. 9.*
2. Question not whether they should do you good, or you they hurt. It is Praise worthy, to be first in well doing; and if you do good to your Enemies your reward is with God. *Mat. 5. 44. Rom. 12. 20.*
3. Quench not the Spirit; nor suffer any good Motion arising in your Heart to pass away, but feed it by Reading, Meditation, Prayer and Practice. *Thes. 5. 19.*

R.

Read daily something of Gods Book for the encrease of knowledge and conscience; And add hereto Meditation and Prayer: For these three faith Luther, make a Divine: All time thus spent is well Redeemed. As for lascivious and idle Books, shun them as Rocks. *Psalm 12. Deut. 6. 6.*
2. Rejoyce in the good you know by another: Praise God for it, pray for the encrease of it. But if you know any Evil by any: Mourn for it, and if you can, by Brotherly admonition Amend it.
3. Refrain your Ears, Eyes, Mouth and Hands, from hearing, seeing, speaking or performing any Wicked or Vaine thing; knowing that Death often entrench in at the Windows. *Job 31. 1. Psalm 119. 37.*

S.

Stick to God as well in Adversity as Prosperity; the one being as Necessary as the other. If you want Necessaries; humble your self for them. If you have them: Be humble with them, and use them well, least you Forsake them. *Jam. 1. 2.*
2. Seek reconciliation with your Neighbour, freely forgiving those that have Offended you, and Earnestly desiring to be forgiven of all that have been Offended by you. *Mat. 5. 23. Psalm 35. 14.*
3. Study to approve both your Heart to God; and your Life to Gods Children in your particular Calling, and Especially to such: As to whom God hath joyed

you: As if a Servant, in Obeying If a Master, in ruling. If a Husband, in loving: If a Wife, reverence, for a good Conscience, a good Name, and good Manners must go together. *Mat. 23. 25. Jer 7. 9. 10. Ephes. 5. 23. and 6. 5. 6.*

T.

Take heed of performing wholly Duties for fashion sake, or without feeling and profit: For this is Hypocrisie or Profaneness. *Heb. 3. 12. 1st. 1. 11. Mat. 15. 8. 9.*
2. Thankfully requite, at least with: 1. Acknowledgement; 2. Heartly affection; 3. Prayer, the good you get by any Man: For there is no Member in the Body but it standeth in need of other mens Gifts. *Rom 1. 12. and 12. 10. 1. Cor. 12. 25. 26.*
3. Think it the greatest thing in the World to Die well: Which to do, you must Inure your self to die before hand, 1: By dying to your Sins, 2. leaving the World in affection, before it Actually leave you; in your last leaving of it, do it willingly, yea joyfully, whatsoever, wherefore, or howsoever God shall call you.

U.

Uow to God and keep it, especially strive in performing the Solemn vow of your Baptism, and the Covenant which you renew in the Lords Supper, *Eccles. 5. 34. Psalm 16. 14.*
2. Variance and Discord with Men will not stand with your Peace with God; if you love God, you will love Men also, for Gods Image; or else for his Commandment sake. *1. John 4. 10.*
3. Use the World as not using of it, and your prosperity and liberty to be bettered by them, that is not gained that is gotten with the loss of your Soul, and then is the Soul Exchanged with one handful of the World: When it is not gotten and held, 1. In Christ restoring it, 2. In Christ the chief gain, 3. For Christ the Lord of it. *1. Cor. 7. 31. Mat. 16. 26.*

W.

Wait upon the Lord, and he will direct your way, become his Servant, for this is the way to Attain your true Liberty. *Psalm 37. 7.*
2. Weep with them that weep, and Fellow feel the Afflictions of the Brethren that are in the World, Christ in Heaven accounteth the sufferings of his Saints his own; and we his Members upon Earth must do the same; Religion and Mercy are well matched by God; and must not by Man be divorced; as for the Miseries and Sins of the Age wherein you live, mourn also for them: And pray to God for remedy. *Rom. 1. 15. Jer. 13. 1. Psalm 69. 9.*
3. With not a long Life so much as a good Life: He hath lived long who hath lived well: A short Life in Grace setteth into the Everlasting Life of Glory.

L O N D O N,

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